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15 September 2004

RUS42830.E

Russia: The NGO Sodeistviye operating in Abakan, Khakassia and its treatment by the authorities
Research Directorate, Immigration and Refugee Board, Ottawa

No information on an NGO called Sodeistviye operating in Abakan, Khakassia could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

However, the following information may be useful. Based in Moscow, the not-for-profit organization Sodeystvie or The Social Guarantees & Cultural Development Fund was established in 1997 and its main purpose is to "restore and nurture a culture of giving and volunteerism among citizens of the Russian Federation" through involvement in projects in a wide range of areas: social welfare, the arts, culture, religion, education, science, the environment, sports and recreation (Sodeystvie, n.d.). Sodeystvie is active throughout the Russian Federation, but no specific reference to Khakassia could be found (ibid.).

Furthermore, there is also an NGO called Grazhdanskoye sodeystviye or Civic Assistance (UN 20 Sept. 2003). Located in Moscow, the "Civic Assistance" Committee was set up in 1990 to respond to an influx of refugees in Moscow (Civic Assistance, n.d.). According to the Solicitors Pro Bono Group (SPBG), a London-based NGO, the Civic Assistance Committee is "the oldest and most active social organization dealing with refugees' problems in Russia" (n.d.).

Its mission is to [provide]

multifunctional reception of forced migrants, humanitarian aid, social and legal assistance, assistance to IDPs [internally displaced people] in the "hot spots" and outside them, a centre for adaptation and training for the children of refugees and forced migrants. (ibid.).

According to Inter Press Service, in 2001, the Committee helped 10,000 refugees in the Moscow region (7 Dec. 2001). The UN Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs in the Russian Federation indicated that Svetlana Gannushkina was chairwoman of Civic Assistance in September of 2003 (20 Sept. 2003), while Civic Assistance reported that she was one of the three co-chairs (n.d.). No information either on the involvement of Civic Assistance in Khakassia or on the treatment of civic assistance by the authorities could be found among the sources consulted by the Research Directorate.

This Response was prepared after researching publicly accessible information currently available to the Research Directorate within time constraints. This Response is not, and does not purport to be, conclusive as to the merit of any particular claim for refugee protection. Please find below the list of additional sources consulted in researching this Information Request.

References

Committee Civic Assistance. n.d. <<http://www.openweb.ru/ccca/eng/htm/>> [Accessed 7 Sept. 2004]

Inter Press Service (IPS). 7 December 2001. Sergei Blagov. "Rights-Russia: Volunteers Help Russia's Refugee Children." <<http://ipsnews.net>> [Accessed 8 Dec. 2001]

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The Solicitors Pro Bono Group (SPBG). n.d. London.

<http://www.probonogroup.org.uk/spbg/publications/int_dir/c/css/c_1.htm> [Accessed 2 Sept. 2004]

United Nations. Office for the Coordination of Humanitarian Affairs (OCHA) in the Russian Federation. 20 September 2003. *SHA Sitrep17 01.09.2003-14.09.2003*. <http://www.ocha.ru/public.php?_act=doc&_op=print&_ti=7356> [Accessed 2 Sept. 2004]

Additional Sources Consulted

Internet sites: Dialog, International Helsinki Federation for Human Rights, Radio Free Europe/Radio Liberty, Human Rights Watch, Action Without Borders, Development Gateway, Electronic sources: Civil Society, ITAR-TASS, *The Moscow Times*, *The Russia Journal Daily*, *Russia Today*, Global Internally Displaced People Project (IDP) of the Norwegian Council for Refugees, Human Rights Internet.

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